

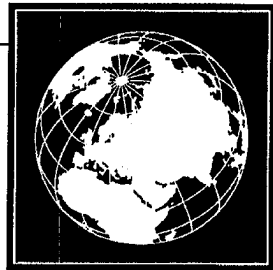


Director of Central Intelligence

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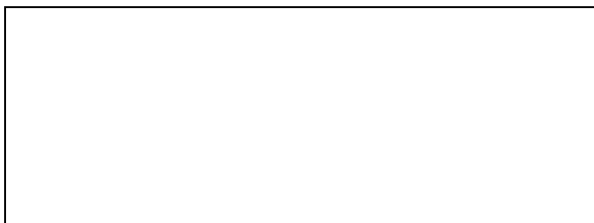
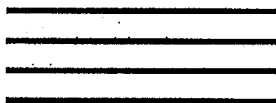


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SOUTH KOREA: Mulling Response to North Korean Threats

Foreign Minister Kong [] believes P'yongyang's threat to avenge the killing of its infiltrators is "serious." He assessed the most likely retaliation scenarios to be an undefined incident along the DMZ, a sabotage or terrorist attack in South Korea, or the murder or kidnapping of South Korean citizens.

— Kong said the North is also probing for weakness in the US-South Korean alliance. He argued that a display of military power might be necessary to show resolve. *He apparently rules out a substantial augmentation of US troops, which could provoke the North to lash out violently.* []

Seoul, at a minimum, wants a Security Council presidential statement on the submarine incident; Kong said Beijing is signaling that it will not block the move. *The South has been slow to decide on other responses, in part because it has few attractive options.*

— *Any effort to deliberately hinder implementation of the Agreed Framework or pursuit of four-party peace talks would isolate South Korea without harming the North. P'yongyang would be pleased if Seoul limited its participation in both efforts.*

— *Halting secret talks with the North on economic aid would foreclose the South's only forum for bilateral contact. This would leave the diplomatic field to direct US-North Korean contacts on issues such as POWs/MIAs.* []

Seoul must also be wary of erratic South Korean public opinion, which in the past has turned in favor of cooperation with the North after periods of tension. [] []

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